may begin, and (iii) beginning recording of the new message at the identified point;

sequencing playback means for playing the new message from the identified point defining the beginning of said new message with no manual involvement of the user other than activating the multifunctional switch means.

Please amend claim 5 as follows:

~~5.~~ (Amended) A method for recording a new message on a hand held recording device without disturbing the physical continuity of existing messages and without manually searching for a blank segment of memory on the flash memory digital recording medium, said method comprising the steps of:

a) placing the recording device in an idle mode where all recorder functions are inactive; and

b) activating a record switch causing the recording device to:

i) search for an end of a last recorded message on the recording medium,

ii) identify a segment of flash memory past the end of a last recorded message as a beginning point where the new message may be recorded, and

iii) begin recording a new message at the beginning point.

Please amend claim 9 as follows:

8. (Amended) [A] The method for recording a new message on a hand held recording device as defined in claim 4 wherein the method comprises the additional steps of indexing a message as it is recorded in a hand held recording device, enabling a user to quickly return to an indexed segment of memory within the message, said method comprising the steps of:

a) beginning a recording by activating a record switch on the hand held recording device;

b) activating the record switch while recording to identify an index point of the recording to be indexed for future reference; and

c) [providing means within the hand held recorder for] identifying each index point as a starting point of a new recording segment in a larger contiguous memory segment.

Please amend claim 10 as follows:

9. (Amended) A device for enabling the testing of memory integrity in a removable flash memory recording medium [chip] and the marking of defective memory such that voice messages are only recorded to segments of flash memory capable of storing electrical signals, said device comprising:

a solid state digital hand held recording device having a multifunctional switch assembly and a record switch assembly, the flash memory digital recording medium including a region forming a continuity of pre-recorded messages, a printed circuit board including a microcontroller electrically coupled to the switch

assemblies and operable to (1) control the processing of sound into electrical signals, (2) store said electrical signals on the recording medium, and (3) play said sounds stored in the flash memory digital recording medium; and

memory integrity verification means for ascertaining whether the flash memory digital recording medium can record voice messages to said memory with no manual involvement of the user other than inserting the removable flash memory digital recording medium into a plug assembly in said recording device.

Please amend claim 12 as follows:

~~12~~. (Amended) A device for enabling indexing of a new message whereby a user may rapidly locate indexed segments of flash memory within the new message, said device comprising:

a solid state digital hand held recording device having a multifunctional switch assembly and a record switch assembly, a flash memory digital recording medium including a region forming a continuity of pre-recorded message, and a printed circuit board including a microcontroller electrically coupled to the switch assemblies and operable to control the processing of sound into electrical signals, store said electrical signals on the flash memory digital recording medium, and play said sounds stored on the flash memory digital recording medium;

message indexing means for indexing a message when the user activates the record switch while recording, thereby making an